



Superhighways such as these compete with houses for room to grow. Complex highway systems have revolutionized the inventory policies of some companies by making truck transportation rapid and dependable.

increasing stream of earmarked user taxes, which amounted to more than \$5 billion per year in the 1970s.

Airways and Airports

Before 1920, the airplane had practically no economic significance. For more than a decade after the first flight of a heavier-than-air craft in 1903, the new machines were the playthings of eccentric sports enthusiasts and scientists. World War I gave impetus to the development of airplane engines and structures, but major improvements lay in the future. In 1918, a military airplane was used for a commercial purpose when the Post Office Department and the War Department jointly sponsored an airmail route between Washington and New York. The project was soon dropped, but in the early 1920s the Post Office Department established airmail service between major cities. In 1925, when it appeared that airmail was practical, Congress ordered that all contracts be let to privately owned airlines. The Air Commerce Act of 1926 marked the first federal attempt to promote civil aviation. Funds were provided for a civil airways system as well as for improvements in navigation facilities. Meanwhile, sensational long-distance flights, financed by the rich, caught the



Fast domestic and foreign air travel has made airports more dependent on long runways and nearby residents painfully aware of the screech of jet engines. Drastically shortened travel time has greatly increased the productivity of business and professional people and has changed the character of many service trades as well.